GOD'S MERCY GOING BEFORE

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"The God of my mercy shall prevent me."
Psalm 59:10

IF you read this Psalm, you will find that David was in a very grievous plight. He was surrounded by the most cruel and the most false of men. They were ravening like wolves over carrion, and endeavoring to destroy his character, and even to take away his life. David knew where was his resort. As the conies make their dwellings in the rocks, and as the swallows have built a nest for themselves at God's altar, so David resorted to his God, and to his God alone.

All the skin-bottles may be dry, but there is water in the well, and all creature comforts may fail, but there is an all-sufficiency in an unfailing God. If all be false to thee, God will be true, and if all hate thee, God is love, and if thou art in Him, He cannot be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee, but love towards thee, and love only, shall rule the day.

Let me persuade every child of God here in the hour of his trouble to resort to the comfort which David found so availing. Away, as a bird to the mountain, away, away to thy God. If thou hast Rabshekeh's letter about thee, go and spread it before the Lord. If thou hast today an inward sorrow that thou canst not tell into any other ear, go, like Hannah, and stand before God, and there let thy soul pour out its bitterness.

You shall find that, in consulting human sympathy, there is some gain—often very little—but in seeking the sympathy of your great High Priest above, there is much gain, and there never can be failure. When David returned to Ziklag, He found it burned, and his wives carried away captive, and his men had lost all their property, and all their families, and spoke of stoning him, but it is written "David encouraged himself in his God."

Now, if you have come to something like the same plight, if your affairs are at the lowest ebb, and there is the sharpest winter passing over all your prospects, now turn ye to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope. Trust in the Lord and wait patiently for Him. Be of good courage, for He shall strengthen your heart. If we learn only that lesson and do but put it in practice throughout our life, we shall have a good reward for coming up to the assembly of God's people tonight.

But now, a few words upon this text of David's. He declares that the God of His mercy would go before Him or forestall Him. The word "prevent," when it was used by our translators, did not mean at all what it does now. It means here that God would provide, would forestall, would be beforehand in loving-kindness with Him, and the two points we will speak of tonight are these—*it has been so, it shall be so.*

First—

I. IT HAS BEEN SO.

The God of our mercy has gone before us and outrun us. It has been so, *in the salvation of all His people.* Long before time had begun, God had foreknown His chosen, and fore-ordained them unto eternal life. They had not chosen Him, for they were not in existence. He chose them as He saw them in the glass of His decrees. It always must be that God prevents or outruns His people, since from before the foundation of the world He had loved them, loved them with an everlasting love.

There can be nothing before this. We know of nothing that can stand side by side with it, so far as we are concerned, for we had no being, except in the purpose of God. But even then He loved us. He loved us when we were dead in sins, when we had not a heart with which to love Him, when we were rejecting Him altogether, and did evil even as we could, yet He loved us notwithstanding all. It must always be true if we think of the doctrine of election that He prevented us with His mercy.

It was so, also, *with redemption*. Where were we when Christ redeemed us? My brethren, our sins were laid on Christ, but they were not then committed. Our transgressions were then taken by Him, but we had not even perpetrated them then. We were not yet living, and yet a Savior was provided for us before we were, by any actual sin, personally lost. A fountain filled with blood was provided for us before we had, by any actual guilt, become defiled.

Oh! Here was divine forethought, here was a precious preventing, a going before, of God's goodness! How He must have loved us, that knowing what our wants would be, foreseeing the abundance of our sins, He laid by in store the divine atonement, the sacred propitiation, by which all our sins should be put away. This was another forestalling of His mercy.

Indeed, brethren, if you think of it, the *whole Gospel* is a forestalling of us. There was that Book written exactly to meet your case and mine, when as yet our case was not in existence. Here was a covenant "ordered in all things and sure," and made for us in the person of Christ. We were no parties to it, for as yet had not any being. Here was mercy laid by in the covenant, everything that our necessities could require, grace for grace, supplies for all the needs of our nature, treasured up for the poor mendicants before we ever became beggars, or knew that we were in need.

Think of the fullness that there is in Jesus Christ, and all these eighteen hundred years ago in matter of fact, and there from the foundation of the world in the divine purpose for every elect soul, though many of them would not come into being, until remote centuries had flown by. All this forestalled, and the giving of the Holy Spirit too, by which the saints are now called unto repentance, and unto anew life, and all the operations and influences of the Holy Spirit which are all provided for in the covenant of grace, all bestowed upon the saints as one by one, they come into life, but all provided for long before they were born.

My God, Thy goings forth were of old, from everlasting, and all thy goings forth were full of love to me, and to all them that love Thee! How marvellous art Thou in Thy condescending grace! Where shall I find words with which to adore Thee? How shall I sufficiently give Thee the gratitude of my heart in outward expression for this Thine ancient, Thine everlasting love towards those whom Thou hast chosen? Bless His name, oh! ye His people, live to His praise, and love Him all the day long!

But this truth met with a further illustration in our experience *at the time of our conversion and before it.* Observe the preventing goodness of God, with many of us before conversion. We might have committed the unpardonable sin, but we were always kept from that—how, we may not know, and probably never shall until we are in heaven. We might have put ourselves into positions where instrumentalities which were blessed to us might never have reached us. We have sometimes been on the verge of committing sins which might have led us in a downward career of vice, farther and farther, and might even have led us to destroy ourselves.

Speaking after the manner of men, our soul has run innumerable risks, each one of which must have led to eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord, had it not been that preventing mercy was beforehand with us, and would not let us commit the fatal act which would have consigned us to everlasting perdition. Many and many a time has He held back His servants when they were just on the edge of the fatal precipice, when they were about to take the deadly poison which must have destroyed their souls eternally. His mercy, in some providence which they did not understand has interposed.

And you who are here tonight, you have been sick lately. Well, that sickness has kept you out of a sin into which you were beginning to slide. You have lately been overtaken with a very terrible loss. Yes, but your soul was getting eaten up with covetousness, and if it had not been for that loss, you had

not been here tonight, you would have been still seeking after the world with both your hands, and you would not have had an ear for anything like a message from the throne of God.

Probably, it may be a part of the joy of heaven to be permitted to see the manifold wisdom of God in His dealing with us even before we were quickened by His Spirit. There are marvellous preparations, I do not doubt, which are going on in human hearts for the more effectual work of grace, for there are many who are not converted, but whose case is very hopeful. They are like what our Lord called "honest and good ground," ready for the living seed.

Holy teachings at home, Godly examples, works within the mind that have tended to elevate the taste and purify the morals, and a thousand other things may come in as a sort of preparation for the true work of grace, and in looking back, whilst we must, first of all, see the preventing grace of God in keeping us back from sin, we can next see it in gently leading us, though we knew Him not, as He did Israel of old, taking us by the arms and teaching us to go, sweetly inclining us, drawing us gently, until the time should come when He should pass by us and say unto us, "Live." All the history of an elect child of God even before conversion, will be found to be full of traces of the preventing goodness of the Lord.

But probably we noticed this most *at the time of our conversion.* Some of us recollect when we first began to sigh and cry after a Savior, but oh! how He prevented us with His mercy then! The sermon that we heard seemed exactly to suit our case, though the minister knew nothing of us, and when we turned to the Word of God, there were texts there, some of them very terrible ones, but they did for us just exactly what ought to have been done.

They helped in the cutting and tearing process that was necessary, before the pierced hand should come and bind up our wounds. God's mercy in forestalling us helped us to the tenderness of heart that we were seeking after, helped us to the repentance that we longed to feel, helped us to the contrition which we desired to experience, helped us, in fact, to have done with self, and to begin with Him, helped us to see the depravity of our hearts as soon as ever we began to desire to see it, and to be humbled on account of it.

But do you not remember *when those desires began to assume the form of prayer*, when you got some light as to the way of salvation, and desired how to close in with Christ, and to trust him? How swiftly did the divine Father then run to meet His prodigal child! Oh! happy day when He fell upon our neck and kissed us, when He took off our rags, and put on the raiment of joy, and bade the music and dancing go on in the house, because the lost one was found! Oh! at that time, in gracious answer to prayer, almost as soon as we began to pray, perhaps, we had an instance of how He prevents us with the blessings of His goodness.

We were not fit to receive His mercy—so we thought—but His mercy came. We were not ready for Christ, but Christ came to us. We felt ourselves so hardened, but He came and softened us. We could not squeeze out a tear, but He accepted the dry bottles that would have had tears in them if they could. We felt as if we were just nothing, Christ knew that our nothingness just made room for Him to be everything, so He came and took us at our worst, and gave Himself to be ours forever and ever.

Oh! if He had waited until we had washed that foul face, and taken away every stain with floods of tears, oh! if He had waited until we had cleansed those filthy hands, and washed them snowy white, until we had found a wedding dress in which we should have been fit to come—ah! Savior, Thou wouldest have waited even till now, and e'en forever, for we never could have been fit for thee.

But no sooner did we long to come, no sooner did we feel that we would fain come if we dared, but felt that we were all unfit to come, than thy swift feet of mercy brought Thee to Thy children, and the grace was given for which we scarcely dared to hope. That is my experience, brethren and sisters, and I know that it is yours—God in the matter of conversion preventing us with His mercy.

And how has it been since then? Take another illustration, *from your life*. Have you not oftentimes been prevented by the God of your mercy—by directions given when you were just about to take a wrong step? I remember well, and never can forget, how the whole turn of my life was made by the providence of God in what we should call an accident.

I certainly, in all probability, had not been here tonight, if it had not been that an engagement made to meet a certain gentleman at a certain time was punctually kept by us both, but a servant showed him into one room on one side of the passage, and showed me into another on the other side, and we sat there two hours waiting for one another, but missed each other, and so the whole current of my life flowed in another direction.

I recollect a course of action which I should have adopted, but from which I was altogether turned by hearing, as I thought, as I walked alone and sought direction, such a voice as this, "Seekest thou great things for thyself, seek them not." That text guided me in what I believe was a right, prudent, and certainly has been a happy way. Had it not been for that, I might have gone astray, unwittingly, but still unwisely, into all sorts of paths.

Have you not found it so? Just when you did not know which way to go you had the direction when you sought it. If you applied to God, He gave you guidance by some means, just as surely as the Jew had it when He resorted to the priest who wore the Urim and the Thummim. Take care that you always recollect this in the future, if it has been so in the past. God has gone before you, and marked out your path for you, and given you a plain map of the way. Has it not been so?

Moreover, He not only tells us the way, and so prevents us, but *He clears the way for us.* Great difficulties have frequently run in our way in providence and in grace, and we have been like the women who went to the sepulcher. We have said, one to another, "Who shall roll us away the stone?" but when we have come there, behold "the stone was rolled away, for it was very great." God had made a road where we could not see any and could not make any.

What, have you never gone through the Red Sea? Have the waters never stood upright as a heap on either side while you, as God's chosen, went through? I know you have had an experience analogous to that. Then treasure up the memory of it. Do not be ashamed now, in your talks with your fellow Christians, to tell that the Lord has prevented you with His goodness, in clearing your way for you.

How frequently too, has He prevented us with His goodness, *by supplying our needs!* Like the Israelites, who, however early they rose in the morning found the manna from heaven awaiting them, so has it been with you, with all who trust God. Your needs have not come so soon as the supplies. In fact, some of us have only known our needs by finding the supplies sent, and we have said, "Then I must have wanted this, or it would not have come," and we have blessed the Lord as we have seen our soul's necessities in the light of the grace that has come to supply them.

Oh! it has been so with you, you know it has. You have had to move, perhaps, from place to place, and God has prepared the place for you. It may be that your life has consisted much of wanderings to and fro, and tossings about, yet though you seemed like a football, you have never been tossed anywhere, but what you have fallen on your feet, and fallen into the place too, that God had provided and prepared for you. So it has been up to the present, has it not? Has He not thus prevented you with His goodness?

And once again, how often, dear friends, *when we have begun to pray for a mercy, we have had the mercy while we have been yet calling,* while we have been speaking, He has heard us. How frequently have we desired to return from our backslidings, and whilst we have been desiring to return, He has appeared and melted us down in penitence and gratitude. We have desired sanctification, and we have had the rod sent to our house directly, which was probably the very speediest way to ensure our growth in that respect. Whatever we have actually needed of the Lord our God, He has not withheld it from us in its season, so that we will join in saying that until now it has been so, it has been so. The God of our mercy has prevented us.

Now, in the second place—

II. IT SHALL BE SO.

It shall be so with you *who are seeking Christ tonight*. God's rule for the future is, His action and conduct in the past. He never changes. You must not imagine that Jesus Christ will be sterner with you than He has been with others like you. If it has been His custom to reject those who have come, He will

reject you, but if it has never been so, it never shall be so, for "him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out." Hearken then to Jesus now. God will prevent you with the blessings of His goodness. Now, you have been thinking lately—

"I'll to the gracious King approach,
Whose scepter mercy gives."

And you have thought to yourself, "Before I can come, I must feel my need aright." Now, you think you do not feel your need, and you have been troubled a great deal lately because you have not that tenderness of heart that you ought to have. Now, if you cannot come to Christ with a broken heart, come to Christ for a broken heart. He is ready to give it to you. The preparation of the heart in man is from the Lord in this respect. Come and tell Him that you want a broken heart. One of the best prayers you can pray is, "Lord, create a right spirit within me."

You say, perhaps, "Sir, I want more than a broken heart, I want even to learn to pray." Well, I remember what Mr. Fuller once said to a young man who was trying to pray, and could not, he whispered to Mr. Fuller, who was kneeling by his side, "I cannot pray." "Tell the Lord so," said Mr. Fuller. So, brother, when you say, "I cannot pray as I would, I cannot express myself as I desire," go and tell the Lord that you are a poor, ignorant soul, and that you do not know how to pray, and say, "Lord, teach me." "Oh! but I do not feel the desire I want to feel." I have often found that those who have most of desire think they have not any.

Well, go and tell the Lord about that, and ask Him to give you the desire which shall be necessary to make earnest prayer, that you may begin to pray, that you may have a broken heart. Wherever you like to go back to, I will go back with you, but I will tell you that Jesus Christ was there before you, and that He will meet you there with just what your souls want. He is there ready with it. He will prevent you with the blessings of His goodness.

The God of my mercy shall prevent and forestall you. "Well," saith one, "but I think that I ought to have some sort of preparation for God, I do not mean merit, but still there must be the cleansing of the hands, and the reformation of the heart." Yes, I know there must, and I know what is more: that there will be all that, if you come to Christ for it, but if you try to work this in yourselves before you come to Him, you will certainly fail of it.

Now, instead of going roundabout to find preparations for Christ by way of reformation, come to Him as you are, for He will give you all the fitness that you think you ought to bring. He has got it all. Christ did not come to save the righteous, but sinners, just as a physician does not present himself to heal those who are whole, but to heal those who are sick. "But I do not feel my sickness." That is part of your sickness, that you do not feel your sickness. Come and have that cured as well as all the rest. Do not think that you are to patch up a part of the cure, and then to come to Him, but oh! stand on one side, and let Him prevent you with the blessings of His goodness, of His love, and His blood, and His Holy Spirit. He will meet you just where you are.

"But I am desirous to be saved," saith one "and I do not think that Christ is willing to have me." Ah! but recollect the verse we sometimes sing—

"No sinner can be beforehand with Thee;
Thy grace is most sovereign, most rich, and most free."

If you have a heartfelt desire after Christ, I know where you obtained it. It never grew in your garden. The dust heap of your heart would never yield so sweet a flower as that. It is the grace of God that has made you desire Christ, and for every spark of desire that you have to Christ, Christ has a volcano full of desire after you. Oh! if you have but a farthing's worth of desire for Him, He has ten thousand pounds worth of desire towards you. You cannot outrun Christ, I am sure.

"I fain would be at peace with God," says one, "I throw down the weapons of my rebellion tonight, I will say, 'Lord, accept me.'" And do you think that He is unwilling to be at peace with you? Why, there never was any unwillingness on His part. He willeth not the death of a sinner, but had rather that he would turn unto Him and live.

Oh! do not imagine, do not imagine, any one of you, that if there is any distance between you and God, God makes the distance. No, it is your own heart, your own unbelief, your love of sin—something sinful on your side, but it is no lack of grace on His side. I do not say that God will meet you half way, I do not believe He will, but I believe He will meet you all the way, every inch of it, that He will meet you just where you are.

Like the poor man that was left between Jerusalem and Jericho, of whom it is said that the good Samaritan came "where he was," so Jesus will come and pour in the oil and the wine to heal and quicken. Only cry unto Him. If you cannot frame words, groan out your prayer. Let your aching heart but cry, "My God, have mercy on me! For Jesus' sake, forgive me!" and He will outrun you, sinner, He will outrun you.

He will anticipate the prayer and grant the blessing. Why art thou afraid to come? Thou knowest not what God is, or thou wouldest come right willingly, and tell Him all thy case. He can meet it, He understands it, He knows it now. Oh! come thou. Seek the secrecy of thy chamber. Tell out as best thou canst thy sins, thy fears, thy weaknesses and unbeliefs, and trust in that Son of God, who became man that He might lift men up to God, and as surely as thou trustest Him, thou shalt be saved.

But now, it *shall be so, to you who are the people of God.* He will prevent you with the blessings of His goodness in the future, as He has done in the past. Now, you are, perhaps, going across the sea, to America or Australia. Well, He will be there before you. All is well, He has arranged it for you, before you get there, and you shall have reason to say, "Blessed be the name of the Lord, He has come where His servant should come, and has prepared a place for him, and made him a sphere of labor."

Or it may be, my dear friend, that you do not know just where you are going. Well, I do not know that you need fret yourself about it, for if you walk by faith in the living God, you are going just where He knows it is best for you to go, and He will go before you. As surely as ever His glorious marchings were through the wilderness with the hosts of Israel, so will there be glorious marchings at your head to lead you in a right way, and to bring you to a city to dwell therein. Trust in Him with full confidence, and go onward, for He shall be your guide and lead the van.

I speak now especially to the members of this church. It is a blessed thing to reflect upon, that *in all Christian service, God will go before us.* When our missionaries have gone to foreign lands, it has often happened that, before the missionary has arrived, there has been a tradition in the minds of the people, that there would be white men who would come to teach them some new thing, and thus they have been prepared for it, and frequently whole tribes have speedily given ear to the Gospel of Christ, because for many years God has been leading them to expect His Gospel.

Now, what has happened in heathen countries is happening every day in our own country. I believe that God prepares the minds of the people for the preacher as much as ever He does prepare the preacher for the people. I ask the Lord to give me preparation for the pulpit, but I often think that the other side of it, the preparation of the people for the pulpit, is equally important, and that the Lord will give it in answer to prayer.

Now, how often, dear friends, when you try to do good you will discover that the person you are anxious about has been prepared by God on purpose for you! For instance, a man has been sick and ill. Ah! you see, he had been thoughtless before, and God has just been ploughing the soil by making the man thoughtful and careful, in order that he may now listen to the Gospel. There are a thousand different sorrows that cross over men's minds.

A working man, for instance, may during the day feel depressed, and he does not know why. Some recollections of his early childhood may come across him, but he cannot tell why, and you, perhaps, meet him ten minutes after that. If you would but speak to him of Christ, you would be surprised to find

that you had come just in the very nick of time, when God had made the man ready for you, and then sent you, as a messenger from Him.

Believe it, that whenever you feel an extraordinary anxiety after a soul, you may take it as an indication that that soul is as much wanting you as you are wanting it. There is a something that will attract that person to you as well as you to that person, or if you should seem to be repelled, God has still a design there, and you must try again, and labor again, for a blessing will certainly come. God is preparing the man even while that man repulses you, preparing him for the time when at last he shall cheerfully accept that Savior whom you propose to him.

My brethren, as God's servants, we are very much in the position of Joshua with the Israelites when they came up to Canaan. They were to conquer Canaan, but do you know, Canaan had been conquered long before! For if you conquer a man's heart, it is merely a matter of detail to go and conquer his body, and God had sent before a rumor of what He should do, and Rahab told them that she knew that the hearts of the Canaanites were melted in them for fear. Moreover, God sent diseases, and sent the hornet, so that these people were dying, and those who were living were weakened by disease and stung by hornets, so that the Jewish hosts had an easy work.

They had but to take what God had made ready for them. Go ye up, go ye up, O hosts of the Lord, for God hath conquered the land beforehand for you! All these sorrows and griefs, all the calamities of wars, all the miseries of nations, are but convincing them, as they shall be convinced, that their idols cannot help them, and even as to the Antichrist of Rome, all the kings that have committed fornication with her shall hate her, and shall burn her flesh as with fire. God is working secretly, God is working mysteriously and mightily. Only be encouraged, O church of God, to go up and take the prey, for Jericho shall fall before your shoutings, as God even the Lord your God, shall be exalted, as you win the last great victory.

Think of all this through this month when you will be hard at work, and just go in to win a soul. Go in, for God has gone before you. You, dear teacher, be earnest with that child, for God is intending to bless it, and is getting that child ready. Your instrumentality shall fit to that heart as a key does to the wards of the lock. God is preparing you and preparing it, and good will come of it.

And now, lastly, brethren. We shall expect soon to have done with laboring for Christ, and to have done with pilgrimage and all its cares, except that *we shall have the last river to pass over*. But then "the God of my mercy shall prevent me." There shall be the delightful presence of Jesus, and the shining company of angels, and the visions of glory yet to be revealed, and we shall forget the pangs of earth in the joys of the heavenly land.

Like some one drop of bitterness that is drowned in the flood of sweetness, death shall be swallowed up in victory, and when we come to heaven itself, we shall discover that our God has outrun us there. "Behold," saith the Redeemer, "I go to prepare a place for you." Oh! how delightful it is to think of going to heaven, where there will be nothing to get ready, but where all will be just as we need it, all that can be required to give to us the highest conceivable felicity, all ready, and all made ready by Christ!

Rejoice, then, believer. He will go before you through this earth, and before you into heaven, where He has already gone, bless His name. Live happily, live happily, live to serve Him out of gratitude for what He has done, and the Lord bless you evermore. Amen and Amen!

EXPOSITIONS BY C. H. SPURGEON

PSALM 116:1-6, ROMANS 5:10-21

Psalm Chapter 116. Verse 1. *I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.*

You cannot help loving God if He has heard your prayers. Have you tried him? If you have, you can join with David and thousands of others in confessing that He is a prayer hearing God, and therefore you

love Him. I find the verse might be read, "I love the Lord because He hears." He is always hearing. I am always speaking to Him, and he is always hearing me, and therefore I love Him. Can you imagine a better reason for love?

2. *Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.*

"He hath inclined his ear"—stooped down, as it were, as you do to a sick person to catch his faintest word. "He hath inclined his ear." He has heard my prayer, when I could hardly hear it myself. When it was such a broken prayer, such a feeble prayer, that I was afraid I had not prayed, yet He heard me. He inclined His ear, and "therefore will I call upon him as long as I live." That is, I will never leave off praying, and I will never leave off praising. This is the best gratitude we can show to God.

Now, if a beggar were to say to us "If you will help me today, I will beg of you as long as ever I live," we should not be very thankful to him, but when we say this to God, He is glad, for He wants us to be thus continually calling upon Him.

3-4. *The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.*

He felt as if he had been hunted. As in hunting, they sometimes surround the stag with dogs as with a cordon, so he says, "the sorrows of death compassed me. There was no getting away. I was in a circle of sorrow." Worse than that, his pains of conscience and heart were so great that he says, "The pains of hell gat hold upon me"—got the grip of him, as though he were arrested by them—as though those dogs had come so close as to seize and grasp him. "Then," says he, "I called." At the worst extremity he prayed. There is no time too bad to pray in. When it is all over with you, still pray. Often the end of yourself is the beginning of your God. He means to get you away from every other confidence, that you may fling yourself upon Him. "Then called I upon the name of the LORD."

And what was the prayer? A very short one, "O LORD, I beseech thee deliver my soul." God does not measure prayers by the yard. It is not by the length but by the weight. If there is life, earnestness, heart in your prayer, it is all the better for being short. Read the Bible through, and you will scarcely find a long prayer. Prayers that come from the soul are often like arrows shot from the bow—quick, short, sharp, and God hears such prayers as these—"O LORD, I beseech thee deliver my soul."

5. *Gracious is the LORD, and righteous;*

Wonderful combination—gracious and yet righteous. And if you want to know how this can be, look at Calvary, where Jesus dies that we may live. "Oh! the sweet wonders of that cross, where God the Savior loved and died"—where there was the justice of God to the full, and the mercy of God without bound. "Gracious is the LORD and righteous."

5-6. *Yea, our God is merciful. The LORD preserveth the simple:*

Those that have such a deal of wit may take care of themselves, but "the LORD preserveth the simple," the straightforward, the plain minded—those who believe His word without raising questions. "The LORD preserveth the simple."

6. *I was brought low, and he helped me.*

Oh! many of you can say this, I trust, and if you cannot I hope you will before long—"I was brought low, and he helped me."

Romans Chapter 5. Verse 10. *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

Grand argument for the safety of all believers, having a three-fold edge to it. If He reconciled His enemies, will He not save His friends? If He reconciled us, will He not save us? If He reconciled us by the death, will He not save us by the life of His Son?

11. *And not only so,—*

The blessings of the covenant of grace rise tier upon tier, mountain upon mountain, Alp on Alp. When you climb to what seems the utmost summit, there is a height yet beyond you. "And not only so,"—

11. *But we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.*

Then He begins to explain the great plan of our salvation.

12. *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*

In that one man.

13-14. *(For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.*

Children died who had not actually sinned themselves, but died because of Adam's sin.

15-17. *But not as the offense, so also is the free gift. For if through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offenses unto justification. For if by one man's offense—*

By Adam's sin.

17-18. *Death reigned by one: much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.*

All who are in Christ are justified by Christ, just as all who were in Adam were lost and condemned in Adam. The *"alls"* are not equal in extent—equal as far as the person goes in whom the "alls" were found. And this is our hope—that we, being in Christ are justified because of His righteousness.

19-20. *For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered,—*

The law of Moses.

20. *That the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:*

It makes us see sin where we never saw it. It comes on purpose to drive us to despair of being saved by works. It bids us look to the flames that Moses saw, and shrink and tremble with despair.

21. *That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.